

Citizen

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A D D R E S S

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The CITIZENS of EDINBURGH.

GENTLEMEN,



THE illiberal conduct of the parties engaged in the struggle for political influence in the city last year, gave me no small concern.

Unconnected with either side, I felt a secret indignation at that torrent of invective which was poured forth on both sides. And now that the same struggle is revived, I cannot help thinking, that, as it is a matter of some importance to this country in general, and of the greatest importance to the city of Edinburgh in particular, into whose political scale the weight of the metropolis of Scotland is thrown, it deserves a more calm discussion than persons keenly involved in the contest are qualified to bestow upon it.

I address myself to you, my fellow citizens, the independent members of the town-council; because I am well assured, if you will exert yourselves, your numbers are sufficient to carry the ensuing elections; because you alone are intitled to any consideration from your fellow-citizens; and because it is from your spirited and vigorous conduct they prognosticate a happy issue to this contest.

I do not mean to amuse you with any ideal schemes of shaking yourselves loose from all manner of connection with great men, or of erecting a kind of republic within your own walls. I take matters upon the foot they now stand, and have stood since the union of the kingdoms. I shall take it for granted, that you may still think it expedient, in the present situation of the metropolis, to accept of the patronage and support of some great man in this country, who will find it both for his honour and his interest to exert himself to the utmost for the good of the town, in lieu of that political credit and influence he derives from such a connection.

Upon this supposition, then, Gentlemen, the only question with you is, Who is the man in this country whose patronage will, upon the whole, be most honourable and beneficial to the Good Town? In order to assist you in forming your judgement upon this

this particular, suffer me to suggest a few qualifications which are requisite upon the part of any great man (whoever he is) to whose friends you are to commit the administration of the city at the ensuing elections, and by the application of which you may be enabled to judge of the merit and pretensions of the several candidates.

The first qualification I shall mention relates to the personal character of your patron. He ought to be one who has given substantial proofs of his firm attachment to his country, and indefatigable zeal to promote its interest. In other words, he ought to be a patriot in principles and conduct: by which I do not mean, that he is one who connects himself with every faction, in opposition to government; but that he is one who will adhere to administration while he judges that it pursues such measures as are for the good of the country; and at the same time has spirit to oppose every measure which he deems inconsistent with this great end, or with the interest of any community with which he is connected.

2^{do}, His rank and fortune ought to be such, as not only to give him easy access to the Sovereign and Parliament, when application to either or both in behalf of the city is necessary, but also to put it out of the power of his sovereign, by honours or emoluments of any kind, to seduce him from the true interests of his country.

3^{tio}, You will find it of the last importance to this metropolis, that the person you make choice of be one who is, by birth, alliance, and friendship, connected with the Nobility and Gentry of the best families in Scotland. The town of Edinburgh is such an engine of political influence, that you cannot expect that the grandees of this country will bruik its being long in the hands of one who has no bottom of family-interest, or connections, in Scotland. On the contrary, you may lay your account with such a combination against him, as will render his best-meant endeavours for the good of the town ineffectual. Besides, as the citizens of Edinburgh, properly so called, depend for their subsistence, not upon foreign trade or commerce, but upon the confluence of people of rank and fortune in Scotland who chuse to reside there, nothing will tend more to draw numbers of such to the metropolis, than its being patronized by a man who is connected with the first families of the kingdom.

4^{to}, He ought to be one who has an interest in Mid-Lothian, and who is upon good terms with the county. As Edinburgh is situated in the heart of that county, and surrounded on all hands with

with the estates of its freeholders, it is in their power, in many instances, to facilitate or retard such plans as may be set on foot for the good of the town; and therefore there cannot be a greater blunder in town-politics, than the maxim I have sometimes heard from the mouths of some gaping citizens, That the interests of the city and county are incompatible. The very reverse of which proposition is demonstrable upon the principles of common sense; and nothing can more evince the necessity of the town and the county acting in concert in all their public measures, than the unhappy consequences with which the frequent collisions betwixt them have been attended. When their respective members are in separate interests, what can be expected but that they will thwart one another in all their operations for the interest of their constituents? Where they are in good understanding, their conjunct influence will be exerted for the good of the town, and all opposition will be prevented from the only quarter from whence it could prove effectual.

5thly, He ought to be popular with all ranks, in the country, and in the city. Instances frequently occur, where public subscriptions become necessary for carrying into execution such projects as exceed the funds of the city, though highly conducive to its beauty and prosperity. In such cases, as all these projects are supposed to originate from the great man who patronizes the city, and to be supported by him, infinite advantage will accrue from his being a favourite of the several communities who compose the different classes of inhabitants, from the court of session and faculty of advocates, down to the lowest corporation.

Lastly, He ought to reside in the city, or in its vicinity, at all times, except when the business of the nation shall require his attendance in parliament. I make this exception, because his attendance in parliament is necessary to his watching over every motion that may prove advantageous or prejudicial to the city, and exerting his influence to promote the one or obstruct the other; and I make it the only exception, because his residence in the vicinity of the city is necessary, in order that those in the administration of it may have access for his advice and assistance upon every emergency.

Such are the qualifications which I am certain every well-wisher of this metropolis would wish to see united in that great man, whoever he is, to whose friends you are now to commit the government of it in the ensuing elections.

If your present representative possess these qualifications, and has exerted them with vigour in your behalf, by all means continue his friends in the magistracy and council: if not, and
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if even the best that his own warmest friends can say upon that subject is, that they wish he had done more for the town, then now is the time to look about you, if such a man as I have described can be found. — And if the voice of Fame speaks true, you need not look far. Many of your fellow-citizens still remember, with gratitude, what this city owes to John Duke of Argyle; and his memory must be dear to every man that deserves a place in its councils: — No less renowned for his eloquence in the senate, than for his valour in the field; the latter he exerted in defence of his country; the former in rescuing its metropolis from that perpetual infamy and disgrace which ministerial vengeance had prepared for it. Is there an inhabitant of Edinburgh, who can read his animated speech upon that occasion, without wishing to confer every mark of respect in their power to bestow upon his posterity? Is there one who can hesitate a moment, in a competition betwixt the grandson of John Duke of Argyle, and Sir Laurence Dundas to which they shall give the preference?

Nor does that young Nobleman^x to whom I allude, belie the illustrious race from which he is descended. Although educated in England, a circumstance which alienates the affections of so many of our nobility from their native country, he no sooner breathed the air of Scotland, than he became a Scotsman. With a princely fortune, and in the highest rank of life, could wealth or honours have gratified his ambition, he might, like many of his contemporary peers, have led a life of inglorious ease, amidst the blandishments of a court, unknown to his country. — But nobler objects presented themselves to his view. Not satisfied with possessing the gifts of fortune, he wished, above all things, to convert them into a fund of beneficence to his country. And it soon appeared, that his talents and abilities were not inferior to his public spirit. Exalted by his rank and fortune, and still more by the independence of his spirit, above all mercenary views, he can have no other motive for wishing that the sphere of his political influence may be extended, but that he may have it in his power to be more extensively useful. — And where is it natural for him to expect countenance and support, if not within these walls, which his grandfather preserved from being levelled with the ground? Is it possible, that within those walls there can be found so much as one independent citizen so ungrateful as to obstruct his views?

Adeone apud memores veteris stat gratia facti?

the Duke of Buchan



A CITIZEN.

Edinburgh, Sept. 17. 1777.